



NEWS RELEASE

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Illinois EPA Awards \$106,613 to Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District for Update of the 2011 Embarras River Watershed Management Plan

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director John Kim announced Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will receive over \$106,000 in grant funding to update portions of the 2011 Embarras River Watershed Management Plan. The funds will also support development of a more specific watershed-based plan for at least one of the 15 sub-watersheds within the Embarras River Watershed. Coles County SWCD along with the project partners will also conduct education and outreach activities, including watershed meetings and field days.

“This project will update and better define the current watershed landuse and opportunities for landowners and producers to adopt to further protection of the Embarras River Watershed,” said Director Kim. “This watershed is home not only to wonderful water resources, but also to a large group of citizens, businesses, and organizations that have embraced the water quality protection through the development and implementation of the watershed management planning process.”

The Coles County SWCD, developed the project proposal with support and assistance from the University of Illinois, Illinois and Coles County Farm Bureau, the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, several SWCDs within the watershed, multiple County Boards and municipalities, along with private landowners and businesses. The Coles County SWCD, on behalf of the group, applied for a Section 319 of the Clean Water Act grant from Illinois EPA. The total project budget is \$177,688, with Illinois EPA providing 60 percent, or \$106,613 in grant funds and the SWCD and project partners providing 40 percent, or \$71,075 in match.

“The Coles County SWCD is dedicated to providing education, leadership, and assistance in order to protect and to promote the wise use of our natural resources, which includes clean water and healthy soils. Updating the Management Plan is going to allow us and our partners to continue to provide targeted services in the most vulnerable areas of the Embarras River Watershed,” said Lauren Spaniol, Resource Conservationist, Coles County SWCD. “We're very pleased with the amount of public support we've received through the application process and look forward to continue working with our partners and the public through the update over the next two years and into the future.”

Embarras River Section 319 Grant/2

The 2011 Embarras River Watershed Management Plan was an update to the 1996 Embarras River Basin Resource Management Plan. The 2011 watershed characterization will be updated along with a quantification of point and nonpoint source pollution. The project also includes coordination with local agencies and groups to help them encourage best management practice adoption by watershed landowners and producers. This grant continues the voluntary implementation of the Embarras River Watershed Management Plan, which addresses stormwater and nonpoint source (NPS) pollution issues in the watershed that drains into Embarras River, a tributary of the Wabash River, located in southeast Illinois.

The Section 319 Grant Program is a competitive financial assistance grant program established to help control NPS pollution. Federal funds are designated to the Illinois EPA under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. The funds are then used to support state NPS management programs. NPS pollution occurs when runoff from rain and snowmelt carries pollutants into waterways such as rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and even groundwater.

For additional information on Illinois' Nonpoint Source Management Program and the 319 Grant Program, please visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/water-quality/watershed-management/nonpoint-sources/Pages/default.aspx>.

For information and updates from the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District, please visit <http://www.colescountyswcd.org>.

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